



Wildlands Update for August

General Recreation Notes

It is August, so it's time to start thinking about berry picking. Delicious salmonberries, strawberries, raspberries, and blueberries can be found on many of your public lands. Be Bear Aware: bears will be eating berries as well and are also visiting salmon streams. Songbirds and raptors will begin their flight this month and red squirrels and beaver begin storing food for the winter. Please observe outdoor safety by wearing personal flotation devices on the water and being prepared for weather changes.

Road Closures

The Glenn Highway is closed from Milepost 92 to 97 from midnight to 6:00am weekdays throughout the summer. Plan for delays, usually 30min to 1hr, as there is road construction and repair on all major highways. For updated road conditions throughout the state, visit <http://511.alaska.gov/> or dial 511 in Alaska, (866) 282-7577 outside Alaska.

Alaska State Parks

Alaska State Parks received much needed money for capital improvements this fiscal year. This is great news for the recreation community.

Chugach State Park:

Fish and Game has partnered with Chugach State Park to provide a stream watch program where Fish & Game staff familiarize anglers with bear safety rules and regulations. There have been several sows with cubs sighted but no altercations or inappropriate behavior by the bears at Bird Creek.

Thank you to volunteers who donated their time improving trails around Flattop Mountain. At Eklutna, the camping overflow has been turned into ATV parking and eight tent sites were added to the day use area. For current information please call (907) 345-5014.

Matsu Area State Parks

Independence Mine: The road over Hatcher Pass will remain open until snowfall closes it for the season (usually in late September). Call (907) 745-8950 for information. There is construction going on at Gold Cord Lake, but trails remain open. Nancy Lake State Recreation Area: For current information call (907) 495-6273.

Denali State Park: There is currently no heavy bear activity, though Upper Troublesome Creek trail is still washed out at mile 4. Trailheads are posted with advisories pertaining to flood damage from last year. There are various construction projects ongoing in the Byers Lake area, but it remains open to the public. For more information about Matsu Area State Parks, call (907) 745-3975.

Kenai Peninsula Parks

Kachemak Bay: A large black bear has been hanging around Saddle Trail. If encountered, please give it space. Bear activity is increasing along Humpy Creek and bears have also been sighted around Poot Peak, the Grewing Valley, and Emerald Lake areas. The Moose Creek Bridge at China Poot Lake is out. Cross with caution. A listing of trails openings and closings are available at

<http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/asp/trailcondition.htm> or call (907)262-5581.

Caines Head: The trail to the park is damaged from last year's flooding, but the Derby Cove and Callisto cabins remain open for rental. See comments on the trail at <http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/cabins/kenai.htm>

Alaska Department of Fish and Game

National Geographic's webcam at McNeil River will continue to broadcast until the bears disperse at the end of the salmon runs. Visit <http://magma.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/wildcamgrizzlies/index.html> for great bear-viewing. Beluga whales are following spawning salmon up Turnagain Arm. Brown and black bears have been seen at streams and rivers dining on spawning salmon.

Bureau of Land Management

Swede Lake Trail off the Denali Highway is closed due to the discovery of unexploded ordinance.

Some good websites

Alaska outdoor information:

<http://www.nps.gov/aplic>

Alaska weather information:

<http://www.arh.noaa.gov/>

Alaska Volcano Observatory :

<http://www.avo.alaska.edu/>

Sunrise-Sunset:

<http://aa.usno.navy.mil/data/>

Road Conditions:

<http://www.dot.state.ak.us/>

National Park Service

Kenai Fjords National Park

The information center near the small boat harbor remains open daily as does the Exit Glacier Nature Center. Guided hikes to Exit Glacier (1-2 hours) and the Harding Icefield (7-8 hours) are offered daily. Call (907) 224-2125 for more information. Summer-use cabins in the park (Aialik, Holgate and North Arm) are available for rent through September 9. Reservations can be made by calling (907) 644-3678 or in person at the AAPLIC. For more information, visit the website at <http://www.nps.gov/kefj>.

Denali National Park and Preserve

Denali's summer author series continues with Kim Heacox on "Wilderness" August 23. Winners of the Denali road lottery September 14-17 will be drawn the second week in August. Military Appreciation Day (400 free permits for military personnel) will be on September 18. Permits will be distributed from military venues. The park road will close September 19. Bus and campground reservations can still be made on-line, by mail or by fax. For more information, visit the website at <http://www.nps.gov/dena> or call (907) 683-2294.

Fish and Wildlife Service

Kenai National Wildlife Refuge

Trails and the canoe route in the refuge are in good condition. The refuge contact station at mile 58 on the Sterling Highway is open 10am to 4pm until August 11. Special programs include daily movies until Labor Day and programs at Hidden Lake campground Fridays and Saturdays at 8pm through August 11. Visitor center hours are 8:00am-4:30pm on weekdays and 9:00am-5:00pm on weekends. For more information, please go to <http://kenai.fws.gov/>

National Forest Service

Chugach National Forest

Portage Valley has construction along part of the Trail of Blue Ice and there has been a brown bear active near the day lodge. Make plans for the new whistle-stop at Spencer Glacier scheduled to open in August. Tickets

are available from the Alaska Railroad, www.akrr.com, (907) 265-2620 or toll free (800) 544-0542. For more info, call the Glacier Ranger District (907) 783-3242 or the Seward Ranger District (907) 224-3374. For internet updates visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/chugach>. Wild Chugach Days (Aug 1-7 each year) celebrates the birthday of the forest. Events are sponsored by the Sierra Club. For more info go to <http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/chugach/chugach/pages/special/chugach.html> or contact Katherine Fuselier at 907-276-4048 or Katherine@sierraclubalaska.org

Urban Park Lands

Municipality of Anchorage and the MatSu Borough

Anchorage Parks and Recreation Fall Activity Guide will be published in early September. Check their website at <http://www.muni.org/parks/> Audubon Alaska is offering bird identification at Westchester Lagoon Wednesday – Friday 8:00-noon and Saturday 10am-6:00pm through August 10. Be Bear Aware: Even in municipal parks, you may encounter a bear.

Southcentral Visitor Centers

Eagle River Nature Center

Located at mile 12 of Eagle River Road, ERNC is now open daily 10am-5pm (until 7pm Fridays and Saturdays). The visitor center offers a wide variety of special programs. There is a \$5.00 parking fee not covered by the Alaska State Parks day use pass. Check their website at <http://www.ernc.org> or call (907) 694-2108 for more information.

Campbell Creek Science Center

The visitor center is open Monday through Friday 7:30am-4pm. The center also offers weekly special programs at 7pm, Wednesday nights. Topics for the Midsummer Night's Science Series: August 1-WWII History at Campbell Tract; August 8- Surveying; August 15-Alaska's Bats; August 22-Mushroom Fair. For more information, call (907) 267-1247 or check the website at <http://www.blm.gov/ak/events.html>

Begich-Boggs Visitor Center

The Center also offers a variety of ranger-led hikes including a Portage

Pass Hike, Moraine Hike, and Ice Worm Safari. Enjoy the 2 hour-long film The Greatest Good: a Forest Service Centennial Film every Saturday beginning at 6:30pm in the theater. Call (907) 783-2326 for more information or visit the website at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/chugach>

Alaska Islands and Ocean Visitor Center

The visitor center is open daily 9:00am to 6:00pm through Labor Day. Programs featuring coastal wildlife and other phenomenon run through August 11. For more information call (907) 235-6961 or visit <http://www.islandsandoocean.org>

Alaska Public Lands Information Centers

The **Downtown Anchorage** location is open 9am-5pm daily. Stop by to enjoy the exhibits, special programs, and movies. HD footage from McNeil River is available for viewing on a big screen monitor. Special 2:00pm programs include a gold-panning demonstration (Mondays), Anchorage Audubon: Mystery of Migration (Tuesdays); Alaska SeaLife Center: Marine Mammals of Alaska (Wednesdays), a live animal from the Alaska Zoo (Thursdays); Dog-sledding 101 (Fridays), a live bird with Bird Treatment and Learning Center (Saturdays), and a program on the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (Sundays). Come along for the Captain Cook walking tour at 11:00 and 2:30 daily. There will be a modified schedule beginning August 11. Call (907) 644-3661 or go to <http://www.nps.gov/aplic>

The Fairbanks location is daily from 9am-6:00pm. Call (907) 456-0527 for more information on programs and daily movies.

The Tok Center location is open 8:00am to 7:00pm daily until 8/27, then Mon-Friday 8:00am to 6:30pm. Call (907) 883-5667 for more information or (888) 256-6784 for Alaska Marine Highway reservations.

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